NATO Command Structure
Considerations for the Future

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September 2010

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Executive Summary

This paper explores potential future reforms of the NATO command structure. The intent is to stimulate thought on the current structure's fit to oversee the forces and operations of a growing array of NATO missions. From capacity building with partners to peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and combat operations, Alliance forces are continuously engaged in multiple theaters. These challenges demand a command structure with organizational flexibility, an agile and competent international staff, highly integrated information systems, and deployable elements to accompany mobile forces for sustained periods of time. The command structure and the interoperable communications and information systems that support it are the sinews that tie together the national and multinational forces of NATO and its partners. They also serve to link those forces to the political direction and decisions of the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

The context of the next reform of the command structure is a combination of its history, including earlier reforms, and its current and anticipated future operations. Equally notably are two other factors. One is the need for continuous examination of the command structures alignment to missions, its "fit for purpose." The other is its affordability in the context of other NATO requirements and the economic environment in which NATO and its members must maintain a viable Alliance. As Alliances go, NATO is the most enduring and most successful in recorded history. Its uniqueness is its permanent command structure, a visible testimony to members and those who might challenge them, that NATO is ready and capable of quick and meaningful response given a political decision to do so. A viable and effective command structure is therefore a part of the essence of NATO and a fundamental rationale for membership.

This paper discusses how to think about command structure reform in all its facets. It is a mission-based analysis that assesses the roles of component and joint commands, of ACO and ACT. It offers illustrative options for the future and indicates which of these might better meet NATO's future requirement in terms of being minimally viable and capable of carrying out core missions. Numbers are presented only as relative references; they are neither the result of detailed organization development analysis or intended as a proposed outcome in terms of sizing a future command structure.

The main findings of this study are these:

- The command structure, although reduced by far more than half already since the Cold War, can and should be further reduced for efficiency, even if cost were not a factor. However, in this fifth revision since 1990, there is a point not far below the surface where core missions will be endangered by cuts that are too deep in structure or personnel or the failure to fill the positions eventually agreed with quality staffs.

- The enduring core purposes of the command structure are two: provide strategic and operational command for all NATO missions, both Article 5 and non-Article 5; and prepare members and partner militaries for operational employment as interoperable multinational forces. Neither of these roles should be substantially shifted to the NATO Force Structure. This risks weakening interoperability because only the command structure provides such crucial functions as: the link to higher Alliance authorities; integrating multinational commitments beyond any given NFS

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command's frame of reference; and guiding member militaries toward Alliance-wide transformation and interoperable networking.

- A future command structure should have two strategic commands, a minimum number of operational commands and at least one of each type component command under ACO in order to execute essential operational and peacetime missions.

- ACT, as the essential second strategic command should remain in the US. However it is already "one deep" in many staff areas and further reductions should be considered with extra caution.

- A deployable capability is desirable within the command structure. However, deployability can entail substantial additional investment in equipment, personnel and readiness exercising. Therefore the deployability profile desired at the NCS (three- and four-star) level should be carefully weighed. Rapid deployment is primarily a requirement of the NFS. Related to this, the attempt to provide for NCS deployability through DJSE's has not worked and should be replaced by a more useful capability.

- The level of ambition that relates to the size of the command structure will have to be confirmed or revised. A fundamental of planning is to be ready to take on a second core challenge whenever called on to deal with a first, in order not to risk being taken advantage of if heavily committed, as in Afghanistan. Thus the command structure should be capable of two simultaneous major operations. However, at least some small operations may be an area to share with nations or outside NATO itself, e.g., with the EU.

- The geographic dispersion of command structure headquarters is not the most effective approach and is expensive; it has to be overcome or at least limited as a political obstacle to reform in order to ensure a cost-effective command structure. Nonetheless geography can be expected to pose significant challenges, especially if entire regions are seen as left out. Perhaps the U.S. BRAC process is a model for NATO.

This study assesses three options for a smaller future ACO structure: one considered optimum and affordable, and a second we judge to be the minimum required even with a lower level of ambition. The final option presented serves to illustrate that eliminating all land and maritime components saves little while risking too much in terms of a viable future NATO military capability. One alternative is presented for a reduced future ACT. ACT has much less flexibility in terms of structure and its services to members and NATO are both overstretched and not yet as productive as they need to be. We see little to trim at ACT.

There is considerable momentum toward a decision by heads of state and government at the Lisbon Summit in November that will yield a "fit for purpose" command structure. However, any Summit language will likely provide only broad guidance. There will be many months of work ahead before a new command structure is agreed.

The most straightforward approach to any command structure review is first to identify the missions that NATO should perform, and then to size the structure, personnel, and cost.

The current missions the command structure is expected to perform in peacetime or to be able to perform in time of crisis or conflict, in the broadest sense include:

- Readiness to carry out effectively and successfully any NATO mission within the parameters of NATO's level of ambition[1] requiring the use of military forces
- Maintenance of sufficient capability such that potential adversaries of NATO will be deterred from launching an attack against NATO members
- Assistance, encouragement and facilitation of the transformation of NATO national military forces to forces capable of fighting effectively and successfully in twenty-first century conflicts
- Enhancement of the military capacity of non-NATO nations that wish to partner or otherwise work or cooperate with NATO
- Identification of capabilities, technologies, and practices that can be utilized by NATO and NATO member's national military forces engaged in current and any future military engagements
- Assessment of future potential security challenges and threats and identifying emerging capabilities, technologies and practices that can be adopted to ensure NATO military effectiveness in the future

These missions should be carefully analyzed for applicability to the future. NATO leaders must know: which missions endure; which might be eliminated, substantially reduced, or adjusted in scope; and they must decide on priorities among the missions that are agreed upon.

Based upon agreed missions and their priority the organizational structure, personnel and resource requirements of a future command structure can be decided. Then a transition plan from the current to a new structure can be developed and approved. In this design phase of the process, special consideration should be given to the following in any proposal:
- Ensuring that command structure changes do not result in a hollow force
- Understanding how essential it is that nations are committed to fill completely the command structure's personnel requirements with fully qualified personnel
- Gaining firm commitments from members to provide national or multinational force structure headquarters for agreed missions beyond the capacity of a smaller NATO command structure
- Ensuring that essential component C2 requirements are adequately resourced
- Identifying resources from non-NATO nations to help meet NATO agreed mission requirements as necessary
- Assessing how organizations such as the European Union can provide complementary civilian capabilities in support of a restructured NATO command structure

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[1] Level of ambition (LOA) refers to the types and numbers of missions that NATO military forces should be prepared to carry out—simultaneously, if necessary—as mandated by NATO political leaders, and defined most recently in 2006.

- Assessing risk that may be associated with each command structure change proposed
- Ensuring new functions where appropriate are accounted for in a new structure, such as cyber defense
- Sustaining the essential functions of ACT and full coordination between ACO and ACT
- Maintaining a robust capacity for partner activities, especially those that involve capacity-building
- Maintaining a strong transatlantic link

The Enduring Rationale for a NATO Command Structure "Fit for Purpose"

The most fundamental question that might be asked is, why does NATO need a command structure when it faces no proximate menacing military threat? A reflection on this question begins by understanding what the political leaders of NATO members have asked NATO's military to do in peacetime, in time of crisis, and, if necessary, in a conflict or post-conflict situation, including hostile strikes anywhere on NATO territory.

The catch phrase "fit for purpose" is shorthand for a command structure capable of undertaking all missions NATO leaders intend it to do—in terms of its organization, personnel, capabilities, and resources. Military missions are defined by political agreements, in particular the operational level of ambition and the many NATO initiatives to engage with partners, a main focus of such engagement being military. There are also actual operational missions, such as persistent operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. The command structure oversees multinational joint operations through its joint force commands, and directs the Alliance business of building greater multinational interoperability though its force-specific component commands. Political leaders seek military advice from time to time on what essential structure is needed (fit) for command over all common agreed missions (purposes). Once a new structure is politically agreed, it can only be fully effective in carrying out assigned missions if it receives the funds, personnel and other resources associated with its full capabilities. It also needs sustained political and public support.

The raison d'être for a permanent command structure was evident throughout the Cold War (see History of the Command Structure below), but thereafter some questioned its purpose. After due consideration, NATO political leaders chose to give new missions and purpose to a much smaller command structure. The first of these missions was to assist a growing list of members in maintaining interoperable yet significantly downsized military forces to serve enduring common interests. Related to this goal was the extension of military-to-military ties to interested partners through an array of mechanisms, from the earliest Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative to a host of tailored arrangements with regional groups as well as individual countries. This "building partnership capacity" mission is given particular prominence in the May 2010 Group of Experts Report. While the above missions involve significant investment by the command structure, the rewards are even more substantial: the spread of confidence, transparency and security across an increasing area within which military tensions are all but nonexistent. No less significant is a growing ability of members and partners to work together effectively in military operations, thereby lessening substantially the requirements for NATO resources in operations of mutual interest.

Indeed, nurturing common planning processes and organizational ties as well as interoperable forces yields benefits well beyond NATO. For example, a Strategic Airlift Capability[2] C-17 flew to earthquake-stricken Haiti from Sweden on a non-NATO mission

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[2] The Strategic Airlift Capability is a joint-funded program among some NATO allies that supports NATO as well as non-NATO airlift needs; its primary purpose is to provide airlift badly needed by NATO.

to transport relief supplies from five NATO member and partner countries. The military aircrew, airfield support personnel, and cargo-handling ground crews worked together effectively on both ends of the mission, in large part due to their common knowledge of standard procedures, standards painstakingly developed and disseminated via regular NATO military planning, training, and exercises. These same NATO-born processes and agreements are followed by the EU for its emergent military capacity. Whether for NATO operations, EU operations, or coalitions of forces outside NATO, the militaries of its members and partners are able to come together far more effectively because of a standing NATO command structure. Through its command structure, NATO continues to hone common best practices, set standards, engage in collective planning and training, conduct exercises, and afford opportunities for allies to collaborate on a daily basis. The end product is a huge resource of capabilities available for the full spectrum of political security options.

Creating and sustaining these capabilities among all Allies and partners requires a military organization able to conduct continuous multinational planning, collaboration, experimentation, doctrine development, training, and exercises, as well as educating, and interacting with the national militaries of almost four dozen countries on six continents. The value of this enduring peacetime mission, agreed by NATO but assigned mainly to its military commands, is witnessed in the operational effectiveness of NATO member forces, accomplishing missions at lower cost in resources and lives. For these purposes, the command structure must be designed and resourced as a permanent peacetime undertaking. It must include subordinate commands to provide appropriate oversight of operational activities. It should also include commands that can incubate the development of doctrine, concepts, and force design, and identify and utilize lessons learned. Further, the command structure needs capacity to bring together like forces (land, air, maritime, and special operations) to build their interoperability.

The most visible and crucial mission of the command structure is to oversee joint military operations when the NAC commits NATO forces. Since 1995, NATO missions have principally been deployments to crisis areas beyond NATO territory, first in the Balkans and now as far away as Afghanistan and the Gulf of Aden. The command structure has to be fit for this purpose and to serve as the political-strategic interface to NATO as well as to national leaders of NATO members and partners and, sometimes, host nation leaders. The command structure must also serve as the strategic-operational link to deployed headquarters and forces in the field and fleets.

Finally, the NATO command structure must be no less fit, at an appropriate level of size and readiness, for its longstanding core mission: defending NATO territory from armed attack. The risk of full-scale military attack has receded dramatically since the end of the Cold War. Nonetheless, NATO's credibility with its members depends in great measure on a visibly capable command structure that engages in continuous risk assessment, maintains long-term operational and mobilization plans, and conduct periodic decisionmaking exercises, both military and political. As it happens, with the expansion of NATO territory in recent years, accompanied by a substantial reduction in active forces and bases, moving forces to NATO borders will require essentially the same deployment, sustainment, and command and control capabilities as are needed for expeditionary operations.

Another contemporary aspect of Article 5 defense that a future command structure must be fit to address is the nature of armed attacks and security threats. Modern risks are increasingly likely from acts of sabotage or terrorism against military or civilian targets deep within NATO territory. An additional prominent risk is that of missile attacks, both from space (ballistic) and terrestrial or sea (cruise) sources. Consideration must also be given to the military command structure's purpose in defense against cyber attacks with regard not only to defense of vital NATO communications and information systems, but also supporting national efforts, especially at the seams between NATO and national networks. Critical cyber infrastructure is now an integral component of NATO territory as much as airspace and seas. Other recently assumed NATO missions, including anti-piracy efforts and addressing energy security challenges, must also be taken into account by the command structure.

These are the essential purposes for which NATO must maintain a suitably fit military command structure. What should that structure look like? First, a brief look at how it has evolved.

History of NATO Command Structure

The NATO command structure evolved throughout the Cold War and its aftermath. At the peak of the Cold War, 16 member nations maintained an approximate strength of 5,252,800[3] active military, including as many as 435,000 forward deployed U.S. forces, under a command structure that reached a peak of 78 headquarters, organized into four echelons.[4] Today, 28 NATO members maintain strength of 3,793,778[5] active military, including 137,836 forward deployed U.S. troops of all Services.[6] After the end of the Cold War, as NATO added new missions, identified potential new security threats, and extended its geographical scope of interests, the command structure was reduced to 11 headquarters (from 66) organized in three echelons (reduced from four).

An integrated military structure for NATO was first established in 1950 as it became clear that NATO would need to enhance its defenses for the longer term against a potential Soviet attack. In April 1951, Allied Command Europe and its headquarters at SHAPE were established; later, four subordinate headquarters were added in Northern and Central Europe, the Southern Region, and the Mediterranean.

After the Cold War ended, NATO began to use its military to address a broader set of collective political interests, including regional stability, which became a concern as governments changed, new countries emerged, and crises erupted along NATO boundaries and beyond. NATO developed partnerships with a growing number of non-NATO nations and sought to engage an emerging separate European capacity for security missions.[7] Perhaps the most significant new NATO mission was participation in peace operations beyond NATO territory, meaning forces had to learn to deploy and operate at increasing distances from familiar fixed bases, logistics, and command posts. Uncertainty about threats to stability required the military to provide Alliance political leaders with the means to react quickly and effectively in time of crisis and be flexible with regard to missions.

With changes in NATO missions and substantially fewer active military forces, NATO reached agreement in 1997 on a significant downsizing of its command structure from 65 headquarters to just 20. NATO retained most of the Cold War geographic divisions of responsibility in the reduced command structure. The two Strategic Commands were still Allied Command Europe (ACE) and Allied Command Atlantic (usually rendered as SACLANT for Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic). ACE now had two regional commands, two component commands and a number of joint sub-

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[3] IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 1988).
[4] Department of Defense, "Military Personnel Historical Reports," available at
http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/309hist.htm.
[5] IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2008).
[6] Department of Defense, "Active Duty Military Strengths by Regional Area and Country," available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/hst0906.pdf. This includes 78,836 troops in NATO Europe and 59,000 troops in Afghanistan.
[7] Renewed European interest in creating its own capacity for military operations was evident as early as 1984 (see WEU Rome Declaration) and grew persistently, first as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) in 1988 (brought into NATO in 1996) and later as the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), which continues under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

regional commands (JSRCs) reporting to each of them. SACLANT consisted of three regional commands and two combatant commands.

Subordinate to the two strategic commands were seven second-level-of-command headquarters. ACE also had a third level of command with a total of eleven headquarters, each with geographic affiliations divided into two regions, AFNORTH and AFSOUTH, each of which contained a subordinate air component command and naval component command, plus a number of JSRCs (three in the Northern Region and four in the Southern Region). SACLANT was divided into three regions and had two Combatant Commands, STRIKFLTLANT and SUBACLANT.

An important new feature introduced into the command structure at the operational or regional command level was the deployable combined joint task force (CJTF) concept.[8] CJTF headquarters were primarily designed for use with peace support operations but also could be deployed for any Alliance role or mission. CJTFs utilize mission-specific task organization with sufficient capabilities to quickly provide the basis of a capable headquarters from the very onset of an operation.

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[8] CJTF was an initiative introduced in 1994 along with the Partnership for Peace. It quickly proved contentious and languished, while PfP grew popular. See NATO Brussels summit declaration, 1994.

The 2003 NATO Command Structure

By the time of NATO's 2002 Prague Summit, it was clear that further major reforms were needed. External factors driving reform included the growing realization that there was at that time no longer a proximate threat to Alliance territory and that NATO's involvement with crisis management and peacekeeping outside the NATO Treaty area was increasing. A third factor was the continuing freefall in defense spending across most of NATO Europe, ongoing since 1990. By 2002 the drop in resources was rapidly eroding military capabilities and putting pressure on nations as well as NATO to cut operating costs of forces and headquarters.[9] In addition, the new spheres of interests and operations made the old regional focus of some commands out of step with new mission areas. The military also made urgent calls for transforming the command structure for Information Age operations and new missions and to address the evolving role of the European Union. All these motives were dramatically reinforced by the paradigm shift in strategic outlook caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, NATO's unprecedented engagement in Afghanistan, and growing concern over the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

All these realities brought increased scrutiny of the utility of an almost completely fixed command structure. Many called for a structure with enhanced deployability, flexibility, and responsiveness. Yet, commands cannot operate only in a deployed mode, and many essential activities, including the majority of administrative and logistics functions are better conducted at fixed bases. At the same time, growing budgetary and manpower pressures increased calls to improve efficiency through institutional reform.

In response, the NATO command structure that developed as a result of the Prague Summit mandate introduced significant changes. The two strategic geographic commands that in 1997 had replaced three commands were now merged into one strategic command to oversee all NATO operations. An entirely new strategic command was created to oversee NATO military transformation, enhanced deployability, and interoperability, and to further multinational doctrine. The new strategic command for operations was consolidated at the operational level into three commands that would provide direct oversight of all NATO forces in the field. A third level was dedicated to strengthening the multinational capabilities of the three primary component forces of NATO members—land, maritime, and air forces. Prague also created the NATO Response Force (NRF), a rapid response joint and multinational force to give the Alliance an early crisis response capability. The NRF also serves to aid the transformation process of national forces from mainly territorial defense forces to highly mobile, crisis response forces.

The main features of the Prague command structure were in place by 2003 as summarized below.

Allied Command Operations (ACO) is the strategic command with responsibility for all NATO operations throughout the Alliance area of responsibility, or beyond as approved by the NAC. ACO is headquartered at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers,

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[9] Alarm over the dearth of European defense investment was reflected in the 2002 Prague Summit Declaration and the very detailed Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) that accompanied the Declaration, wherein nations pledged to achieve specific goals.

Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium. It is commanded by the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR).

Below ACO there were still two operational levels of commands. The first was designed to oversee ongoing joint operations and consisted of two joint force commands (JFCs) headquartered at Brunssum, Netherlands, and Naples, Italy. Each JFC was expected to be capable of undertaking the complete range of Alliance operations. A third headquarters, Joint Headquarters Lisbon (Portugal) was designated to command mainly maritime crisis response operations.

At the third or component command level, the 2003 command structure organized six component command headquarters, two each for air, land and maritime forces. The land headquarters are located at Madrid, Spain, and Heidelberg, Germany, the two maritime headquarters at Naples, Italy, and Northwood, United Kingdom, and the two air force headquarters at Izmir, Turkey, and Ramstein, Germany. These component command headquarters provide a flexible pool of command assets expert in their respective environments, and any one of them could be employed under a JFC headquarters.

Under the new arrangements, SHAPE, as the top headquarters, provides strategic advice "upwards" to NATO political and military authorities at NATO Headquarters, and also provides strategic direction "downwards" to the three second-level-of-command headquarters.

The other command, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, has the lead for military efforts toward transforming the Alliance. ACT, an entirely new organizational structure, is tasked to ensure that the Alliance remains at the military cutting edge. The intention was that NATO transformation would be ongoing rather than a one-time event.

Finally, the current command structure retains the overall chain of command, which leads from ACO and ACT to the NAC, with the NATO Military Committee (MC) providing advice to the NAC and strategic guidance to the SACEUR and SACT. Composed of senior military representatives from the member nations, the MC is the highest military organization of NATO, rendering analysis, advice, and recommendations on defense and military issues to NATO political authorities, transmitting political decisions into guidance for the strategic commands, and acting as the multinational political-military interface overseeing military operations.

As mentioned earlier, a separate decision of the Prague summit was the establishment, of the NATO Response Force (NRF), not part of the NATO command structure but an important new military capability within the NATO Force Structure. The role of the NRF is twofold. First, it provides the Alliance with a rapidly deployable force for crisis response requiring combat operation, including Article 5 missions, and also for non-combat crises. Second, the NRF regimen of preparation, readiness and certification and exercise testing serves as a tool to assist members as well as partners in their efforts toward force transformation. Given the emphasis during repeated military reforms on improving deployability and responsiveness, the NRF drew much attention as the embodiment of the capabilities NATO's new military had to acquire.

In total, the Prague-initiated command structure reforms reduced the structure by approximately 40 percent, from 20 headquarters to 11, this on top of the 70 percent reduction already achieved since the end of the Cold War.

Command Structure Review 2004–2008

Although the command structure changes resulting from the 2002 Prague Summit decision were significant, NATO initiated in June 2004 a further command structure review and the NAC subsequently instructed the NATO Military Committee to focus on command structure modifications that would make NATO's military even more deployable, usable, and flexible, as well as less costly and less manpower intensive.

NATO provided several guidelines for the review, including: 1) NATO forces must be capable of conducting the simultaneous military operations identified as NATO's current level of ambition; 2) there should be no more than 13,000 positions included in a revised command structure; and 3) the current geographical distribution of the command structure should be taken as a given. Also, at least implicitly, the command structure should be shaped to enhance deployable and expeditionary capabilities. The focus of this review was to find economies in the ten-headquarters structure of ACO and in ACT by looking for reductions in the size of each staff while requiring essentially the same level of capability.

After extensive consideration, the NATO Military Committee provided its report in 2009. Key recommendations met the mandate of 13,000 billets of a new "Peacetime Establishment," reduced from the 15,500 requirement previously recommended by military commanders. Another important decision was to raise the status of Joint Force Headquarters Lisbon to the level of a JFC able to provide operational command over any NATO mission, just as with JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples. Redesigned land component headquarters are now titled force commands (FORCOMs) and will feature improved deployable joint staff elements (DJSEs) that include more air force and naval staff participation. There will be six DJSEs, four within the NATO command structure and two available from the NATO force structure. All DJSEs can be attached to any of the three JFCs to deploy as that command's forward operational level command and control (C2). The DJSEs are not separate commands but forward C2 elements of the JFC commander. The DJSE concept is now being developed and tested. The concept keeps forward operational C2 small initially by relying on reach-back capabilities from the parent JFC. If an operation later moves into a sustained, longer-term deployment, the DJSE can be augmented or even replaced by the JFC headquarters.

In late 2009, the NAC approved the Military Committee recommendations stemming from the 2004–2008 Review. Disagreements on implementation specifics have delayed the expected transition to the new manning, but it appears that implementation will take place sometime in 2010.

Future Command Structure Reforms—Beyond a New Strategic Concept

NATO has already concluded that even the 2009 agreed changes are insufficient. In June 2010 the Secretary General asked ministers to consider substantial additional reductions with the Lisbon summit only 5 months away. Significant budgetary pressures facing the Alliance as well as individual members are the main reason for another command structure review. However, military leaders also indicated the structure about to be adopted could in fact be further consolidated under certain assumptions, reducing the number of headquarters and nations' investment in authorized personnel strength. In part this could be possible by shifting elements of the command structure into the NATO Force Structure, which is the responsibility of individual nations. While members bear the cost of both structures, nations have greater flexibility in making Force Structure investment decisions. For NATO, the goal is to realize cost savings through command structure reductions that will allow the Alliance to shift resources to higher priorities such as increasing the deployability of fewer headquarters. Therefore, a critical assumption of the latest review is that NATO will retain any realized savings rather than seeing funds returned to financially strapped members.

There are indeed reasons to re-look the command structure just being put into place. The cost of the revised command structure is forecast to be actually higher than the earlier structure for three reasons: 1) the cost of increasing the deployability of operational headquarters (e.g., adding DJSEs); 2) the decision to keep the NATO level of ambition unchanged from 2006, which drives the number of operations the command structure must be able to conduct simultaneously; and 3) the current political requirement to leave the existing geographical distribution of the command structure unchanged. Some NATO-experienced military leaders have suggested the Alliance could eliminate some component headquarters if freed from geographic distribution mandates. Other headquarters might be collocated to improve coordination as well as save on infrastructure cost. [10]

The following is an overview of suggestions and proposals raised informally that could both improve the NATO command structure and make it more efficient. Some but not all measures could reduce its cost, with caveats as noted.

Reassess the Level of Ambition. NATO's level of ambition is a primary driver of the command structure. Reducing the number of contingencies that NATO must be capable of addressing simultaneously would in principle permit changes in the command structure. As context, most military command and force-sizing models call for the capacity to address two major threats simultaneously in order to deter potential adversaries from seeing opportunity should friendly forces already be engaged. The wisdom of applying this criterion to NATO's most critical requirement, Article 5 defense

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[10] As at least a shorter-term effort to address cost concerns, the NAC has agreed to examine the cost of each headquarters with a goal of identifying best practices and sources of waste, recognizing that even similar organizations can have different costs when missions and operational environmental factors are not the same. It appears, for example, that JFC Naples costs are twice those of JFC Brunssum, and CC Izmir twice those of CC Heidelberg. To the extent that such disparities can be addressed in the shorter term, limited savings of up to €30m a year might be realized.
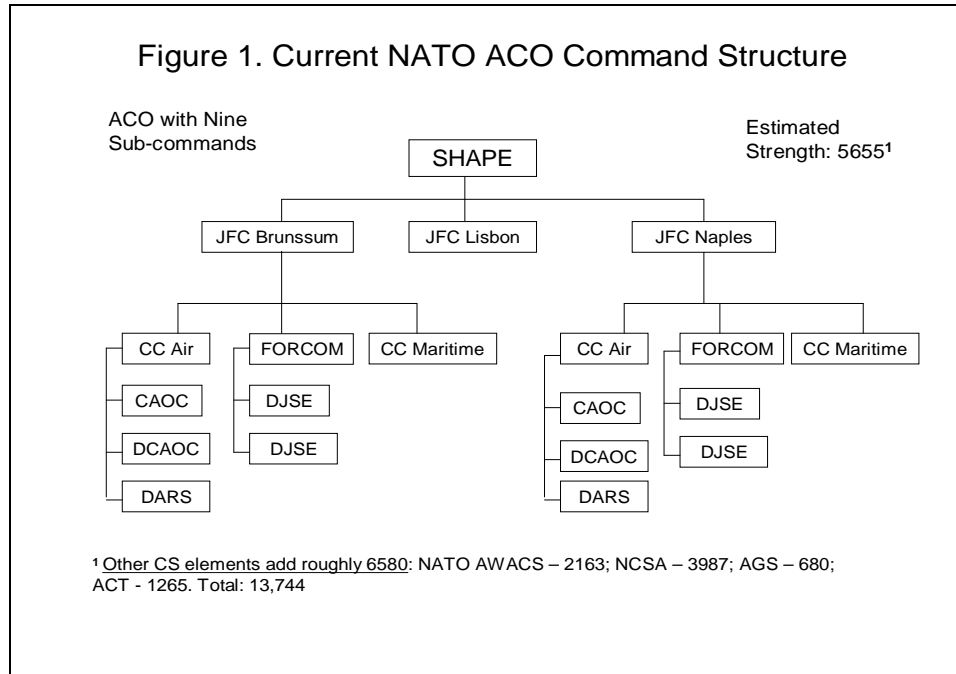
operations, is clear. However, NATO requirements to respond to lesser contingencies might be reviewed. The EU has demonstrated growing capabilities to take on such missions and could share the burden of readiness to respond. For example, the EU and NATO could agree to geographic areas where each takes the lead and the other assumes a posture of support.

Another possibility is for NATO allies to agree to achieve some of the level of ambition with NATO Force Structure—with headquarters as well as forces under national control and funding—rather than requiring the Alliance to maintain a command structure capable of all level of ambition C2 capabilities. In terms of political will this change appears to pose nothing new, as any operation would require national decisions to commit forces. However, how many national force headquarters would be capable of rapid deployment to direct a joint multinational NATO force is another question. Even U.S. combatant commands could be hard pressed to fill the role, which would require contingency planning and exercising with NATO staffs (at least via simulations) that is not currently being done, in part, due to other national priorities and resource limits. A related reality is that moving part of the level of ambition C2 burden to nations only shifts the cost burden of maintaining sufficient operational C2 for the current level of ambition. Instead of all allies contributing, the ally who provided the C2 will incur higher costs while others are relieved, unless NATO agrees to fund the additional preparedness exercises and operational costs if deployed. This may not be an issue if the operation in question is an Article 5-like threat to the ally concerned. Rapid mobilization and deployment could be more complicated if that is not the case.

Peacetime Establishment (PE) versus Crisis Establishment (CE). One aspect of the current situation that has come to light is the competition between the NATO agreed command structure manning of about 13,000 and the requirements to man around-the-clock operations at ISAF and KFOR, headquarters which are higher priority for full staffing but which have no basis in the command structure. Whether or not there is direct correlation, nations routinely fill the PE to 80 percent and many of those assigned do not arrive fully capable. That means headquarters are really operating at well below their indicated strength of high-level staffs. If the PE were reduced further, i.e., by the 20 percent of personnel that are routinely not provided, it would depart from experience if nations provided the lower numbers in full with qualified personnel. This poses a dilemma in recommending reductions. The CE priority is, at least in part, the reason many command structure billets are empty, and the demands of ISAF are huge (almost 2,000 personnel). Presumptively, if JFCs were fully deployable and assumed the missions of KFOR and ISAF (or future C2 missions), the competition between PE and CE for operational commanders and staffs would go away. However, this would also mean that the missions now being handled by the JFCs would also go undone, or would have to be accomplished adequately by some other means, e.g., by national efforts. This is an area for further analysis: what missions if any, especially in the force preparation and interoperability, and the building partnership capacity and relations portfolios, could be curtailed or go undone if a JFC deploys—and what are the alternative ways of cover them?

Modifying Joint Force Commands (JFCs). Suggestions have been offered concerning the best configuration and capabilities of the JFCs. The current command structure configuration (figure 1 below) includes three JFCs, ranging in size from 325 to 675

personal. Though the need for three JFCs was confirmed in the 2009 review, it may be useful to examine whether their composition could be better optimized around a standardized, efficient, and mission-based (i.e., fit-to-purpose) design. In an earlier command structure NATO differentiated between two joint force commands and one joint headquarters (JHQ). The smaller JHQ was designed for limited, primarily maritime missions. It had no subordinate commands or forces in the PE, but would control an operational headquarters and forces for smaller crisis response missions. One future option may be to return to that model or a similar configuration for one or more of the JFCs.

Figure 1. Current NATO ACO Command Structure

ACO with Nine Sub-commands

Estimated Strength: 5655[1]

SHAPE
- JFC Brunssum
  - CC Air
    - CAOC
    - DCAOC
    - DARS
  - FORCOM
    - DJSE
    - DJSE
  - CC Maritime
- JFC Lisbon
- JFC Naples
  - CC Air
    - CAOC
    - DCAOC
    - DARS
  - FORCOM
    - DJSE
    - DJSE
  - CC Maritime

[1] Other CS elements add roughly 6580: NATO AWACS – 2163; NCSA – 3987; AGS – 680; ACT - 1265. Total: 13,744

Another option is to recast JFC Lisbon as a command permanently overseeing the rotational readiness of the NRF, in addition to being the primary command for all non-combat, crisis response operations. The NRF would be predominantly a vehicle for transformation and experimentation. It could nonetheless be deployed in response to NAC decisions. It could be organized, via an expanded menu of capabilities, not only for high end combat/Article 5 missions, but also for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) and noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO). HA/DR and NEO missions are typically smaller, less risky, and of shorter duration than combat and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations. They are also historically more frequent and less publicly contentious. JFC Lisbon itself could include a deployable command cell, but the NRF or another headquarters from the high readiness force structure would more likely be the deployed force command on the ground (or at sea), even for multiple concurrent operations. Restructuring of the NRF to include use in HA/DR and NEO operations could require a new NATO agreement on fundamental NRF missions and organization. However, given difficulties experienced in generating a full complement of combat-ready forces for the NRF (due in large part to the demands of

actual missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo), the change could yield better NRF utility as well as greater public support for its missions and, thereby, NATO.

Three JFCs or Two? Two Layers or Three? Even before the 2009 command structure decision to raise the statute of the former JHQ Lisbon to the level of a JFC is fully realized, the question has been raised about the number of JFCs NATO needs or can afford. This is another issue that requires close analysis. Can one JFC oversee two or more major operations? Can it do so when operations are widely distant or of considerable duration or complexity? In part this would depend on the caliber and completeness of JFC staffs as well as whether each operation has built up a mature theater command of its own. At present, JFC Brunssum supports more than it oversees ISAF operations, and JFC Naples provides oversight of operations in the Balkans and Mediterranean area. Both operational areas are substantial in size and widely dispersed. Notably, ISAF is more than three times as large as Brunssum. Could one JFC oversee both operations? Each JFC holds considerable responsibilities for non-level of ambition missions, including interoperability activities across the Alliance and partnership engagement with Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Mediterranean Dialogue, and Partnership for Peace countries. JFC Lisbon could be assigned all small operations, but if Lisbon were eliminated, could the remaining JFCs take on the small operations mission as well? It may be more effective to retain all three, even if staffed at lower levels, yet with fully qualified personnel.

Another consideration is whether NATO's three-layer command structure (ACO-JFC-CC) should be compressed to two layers. From a cost-reduction perspective there would be little saving in compression without a reduction in the number of subordinate headquarters. However, there are operational arguments to consider. As presently configured, JFCs oversee not only operations but also the multinational integration missions primarily executed by component commands. In a way, component commands are force providers to JFCs insofar as they pursue the interoperability of national forces. Whether all future JFCs and CCs could report directly to SHAPE, especially if the numbers were reduced, is in part a question of span of control. Traditional templates suggest a span of 5–7 subordinate commands; however, widespread use of information systems has raised the possibility of a wider span of control. An embedded issue is that JFCs and CCs perform two very different missions, though related and reinforcing. Therefore, if SHAPE were to control all future JFCs and CCs in a two layer structure, it may need (as it once had in the past) two deputy commanders (DSACEURs), one for operations and another for multinational force integration.

Creating Command Structure Deployability. A persistent criticism is that the NATO command structure has always been fixed and nondeployable. Instead, since first deploying to Balkans in 1995, NATO has created similarly fixed, custom-designed headquarters to command operations in theaters such as Bosnia (IFOR/SFOR), Kosovo (KFOR), and Afghanistan (ISAF). Only lower, corps-level and below headquarters within the NATO Force Structure—provided by members—are fully deployable. When NATO operations become extended, which has been the case thus far without exception, these additional headquarters put pressure on limited staffs, stretching personnel resources between peacetime mission requirements and forward crisis establishment (CE) requirements. The history of western operations as well as current precedent show that standing up tailored theater commands for long operations is the norm, and that making

high-level (strategic, four-star) commands such as US Combatant Commands deployable has not been the case.[11] Instead, combatant commands have established forward command elements for brief operations such as Desert Shield/Storm. In-theater high commands are typically built up well after initial operations and expand around the rapidly deployable nucleus of either the lower-level command or a rapid deployment element from a parent headquarters. Ideally, either is capable of expanding to strategic size with tailored augmentation based on an established design. NATO's 1994 Combined Joint Task Force concept and its replacement, the Deployable Joint Staff Elements, are evidence NATO has been trying to move toward a model of deployable commands using JFCs. This should be further examined in the upcoming command structure review.

A more efficient command structure would be able to invest realized savings in much needed deployable command capabilities. However, it will be more costly to maintain a strategically deployable headquarters than one operating solely from a fixed location, relying on civil facilities, communications, power generation, and similar services. In fact, civil infrastructure is required whether headquarters are deployable or nondeployable. Maintaining deployable headquarters requires additional investment in equipment for both the headquarters and support forces (e.g., security, communications and services units). There will also be ongoing costs for the training, exercise and maintenance necessary to sustain deployability skills.

Each JFC has access to Deployable Joint Staff Elements (DJSEs) housed within the land component commands (FORCOMs) at Heidelberg and Madrid. DJSEs have recently come on line, and two each are planned at Heidelberg and Madrid, available to any JFC. Under this model, JFCs are expected to acquire a modest deployable C2 capability to direct operations of initial entry forces. However, the DJSE concept raises concerns about its viability in an actual operation. One concern is that a DJSE is not an integral component of the JFC headquarters it is expected to represent in theater, diluting command unity and staff cohesion in a situation prone to chaos by its nature. Headquarters that rapidly deploy forward elements typically send their most capable, carefully groomed deputies, if not staff principals themselves. The deployed staff has to be intimately familiar with the JFC staff and its procedures. DJSEs are hundreds of miles away, integral to other commands, and available to more than one JFC on an "as needed" basis. An additional concern is that, as currently organized; DJSEs lack support and security assets as well as robust CIS, being in essence, a staff element dependent on a

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[11] Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) was created in London in 1943 for the invasion of Europe and similar commands were stood up in other theaters; United Nations Command (UNC) was establish in Korea in 1950 at the outbreak of hostilities; the U.S. stood up US Army Vietnam and Military Assistance Command Vietnam (USARV and MACV); US CENTCOM established forward command locations in Saudi Arabia to oversee *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, and in Qatar (2002 to the present) to oversee *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan. These forward headquarters have become substantial commands in their own right, albeit subordinate to CENTCOM, which is still fully operational – and has never itself displaced forward - in the U.S. Ad hoc commands similar to those already cited were stood up to oversee brief campaigns such *as Operation Provide Comfort I* in 1991 and long campaigns such as JTF Bravo in Honduras, JTF Horn of Africa in Djibouti, and other campaigns. In none of these cases did an existing command deploy substantially forward to become a standing theater command in its own right for the duration of an operation. In short, the US and its allies have long relied on the concept of standing up in-theater commands, tailored to the mission, for other than short operations.

hosting organization. The relatively small (for continuous operations) DJSEs are supposed to rely on reach back support to make up for expertise not forward deployed. However reach back depends on near continuous streams of data devised over frequent exercising by elements well-familiar with each other and able to team over strategic distances as effectively as if collocated.

Most operations are not of short duration; therefore, as an operation matures, either a NFS headquarters or a DJSE will need to be augmented to evolve in an organized and deliberate way into full theater headquarters. At present, NATO does not have an agreed template design for a deployed full headquarters such as ISAF and KFOR. These evolved unique to situational demands, and their custom designs can pose difficulties both internal and external to NATO in terms of assessing how to collaborate with its staffs. A combination of lessons learned from past operations and agreements among the NATO Military Authorities could produce a more standardized C2 design as well as a phased build-up concept. Deployment of additional staff, including complete modules for competencies not needed during the early stages but essential later on (e.g., oversight of military/police training) should characterize a deliberate buildup to a mature C2 model for long term, in-theater C2. Personnel rotation could be based on national norms (ideally one year but no less than six months) and staggered to preserve continuity. Whenever NATO is supporting a deployed theater headquarters, non-deployed elements of the command structure should expect to be manned at reduced strength as personnel are tapped for deployment. Nations should also expect to provide additional staff as well. In this shared way the headquarters personnel demands of operations, for both deployed and non-deployed mission requirements is manageable. Once in place, a NATO theater headquarters could be sustained in this way for the long term. IFOR/SFOR lasted about 10 years, and KFOR is almost 10 years old. ISAF has been in place about 7 years.

Are Fully Deployable JFCs an Option? One alternative to creating a small deployable command element (such as a redesigned DJSE) is for one or more JFCs to reorganize as fully deployable HQs. Under this concept, a DJSE-like element would deploy initially, and appropriate command elements of the JFC headquarters itself would follow in stages. For example, a DJSE might deploy to theater 1-2 months after a rapid deploying operational headquarters from the NFS; and the parent JFC headquarters would deploy fully within 6 to12 months of initial operations, leaving back only a select reach back staff capabilities and facilities caretaker elements. Thereafter, the JFC would stay on location in-theater until the operation ended or it was replaced by another JFC. For example, JFC Brunssum could have deployed in 2003 to become the ISAF headquarters. JFC Naples would have then either rotated to that mission for relief, or more likely   assumed the deployed JFC Brunssum's partnership, training, exercising and other PE activities until ISAF's mission ended and JFC Brunssum returned home. However, with only 2 or3 JFCs, this model means either swapping major theater commands every 6,12, or24 months or, given that NATO has had one or more commands deployed continuously for the past 15 years, would mean essentially permanent assignment to either deployed or non-deployed missions for each JFC. This is probably not a workable model without greater resources or significant curtailment of non-operational missions such as partnership engagement, operational planning, and interoperability training/exercises.

A better model could be for NATO to develop a standard theater headquarters design, and put in place a combination of ready deployable equipment and support contracts necessary to deploy an initial C2 capability on short notice. Subsequent modules would be added as warranted until a mature theater headquarters is in place. This model is not far off current practice. It differs mainly in its pre-planned, modular design and deployment scheme. It would be a fixed headquarters similar to ISAF and would require seconding personnel from the permanent command structure as well as from nations, as now. Deployability of the command structure can be imparted by this design, and by a DJSE concept revised to correct the deficiencies described above. Maintaining fully deployable JFC's would be too costly and would likely not work for all the reasons already discussed. However, having a plan to rapidly build up a modular, relatively standard command element once operations mature will give NATO an appropriate deployment capability.

Another factor in considering fully deployable JFCs is their size and cost. Deployable commands are larger and more costly than fixed commands due to the support resources they require to be kept ready and trained. These costs are additive to fixed site cost for the same support (e.g., facilities security, communications, housekeeping, etc) when not deployed. Still, a cost analysis should be done to compare investing in fully deployable JFCs versus in-theater fixed commands in order to confirm or deny this assertion. One conclusion may be that the present, non-deployable operational commands are the most cost effective posture for future operations. Yet, equipping JFCs with a deployable light C2 capability composed mainly of internal staff may be value added at acceptable cost. This model would mean, at least, moving DJSE's to be collocated with and dedicated to a given JFC, likely resulting in base closures at Madrid and Heidelberg. The third model would be the fully deployable JFC with its anticipated higher direct cost.

Finally, indefinite or long term deployment of a JFC would adversely impact other missions. Therefore all JFCs would have to be capable of taking over the deployed commands missions in addition to its own. In essence this will mean Alliance-wide responsibilities for guiding NATO interoperability, transformation and building partnership capacity, rather than focused regional relationships in these critical areas. It would also mean preparedness to take command of smaller-scale contingencies that arise while covering for JFCs that are deployed.

Restructure the Component Commands (CC). The primary task of component commands is to meld the land, air and maritime forces of members into interoperable multinational forces that bring optimum capability to the joint force commands. The concept of NATO component commands mirrors the service departments and training commands most members find essential at the national level. Alliance leaders have always accepted that the requirement for well integrated, highly capable multinational components is an operational constant sufficient to warrant dedicated commands.

However, a number of military experts have shared with the authors that, while the function performed by CCs is vital, even given a growing list of partnerships, it can be met successfully by one of each type command, rather than the current two of each type. Similarly, it has been contended that four combined air and space operations centers (CAOCs) under the air component commands could be reduced. These observations could be addressed by consolidating existing components. For example:

1. Keep only one CC Air and one CC Maritime under ACO, and reduce the FORCOM (formerly CC Land) headquarters from two to one (though it may be necessary to delay this last recommendation until such time as NATO's land-intensive operations in Afghanistan draw down);

2. Eliminate one of the four static CAOCs; three COACs, two of which should be deployable, should be sufficient for NATO territory;

3. Realign the remaining three CCs (land, air, maritime) directly under ACO, freeing more compact JFCs to focus solely on operations. These six commands should fall within ACO's direct span of control capacity;

4. Collocate FORCOM/DJSE with JFCs. Collocation will give JFCs and DJSEs closer working relationships and allow JFCs to better manage DJSE personnel, organization, and training. It will facilitate faster and better coordination on the package of people and equipment to send forward for a particular operation. On the budgetary side, collocation will cost infrastructure and support costs.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the Command Structure. Over the past ten years SOF has moved from the periphery of conventional forces to a recognized and highly prized separate force capability. The nature of current conflicts and those on the horizon suggest the expansion of national investments in SOF will continue. Every NATO member but two and many partners employ SOF. NATO recognized the need for closer SOF collaboration when it established the NATO SOF Coordination Center (NSCC) at SHAPE in 2007, reorganized as NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ) in 2010.

The possibility is low for creating a full CC SOF in the current fiscal environment. However, NATO should consider a future CC SOF, evolved over time from NSHQ at SHAPE, which is not currently part of the command structure but nationally supported by 26 participating members.[12] Today, NATO SOF doctrine, concepts, cooperation, information sharing, and standards are still very much of separate national design, though the intent of NSHQ is to create the interoperable veneer that will give NATO a single synthesized SOF capability. A new CC SOF would provide the engine for multinational concept and doctrine development, training, exercising, and education of the SOF capabilities available to NATO.

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[12] NSHQ is an interesting model for building the multinational operational capabilities that are so critical to a military alliance. Nationally not NATO funded, it has an authorized strength of only about 150 personnel. It is linked directly to ACO through its director, who sits on SACEUR's special staff. All nations are authorized NSHQ positions (the largest is the US at 59) though a few are not yet filled. Two NATO members, Iceland and Luxembourg have no SOF capabilities and do not participate. It is too soon to know if this method of achieving interoperability will work satisfactorily for SOF, or would be workable for broader service components such as land forces. The primary argument for not establishing a CC SOF along the lines of the more proven NATO model is to keep command structure costs as low as possible at a time of austerity. Yet either way nations pay the bill: and there is universal agreement the development of common doctrine, training and operational capabilities – and the improved interoperability that brings to SOF or other forces – is a desired, indeed, a much prized objective.

Options for a Future ACO

Summarizing the above discourse, it is possible to present three alternative ACO models that illuminate the impacts on the core missions of NATO command:
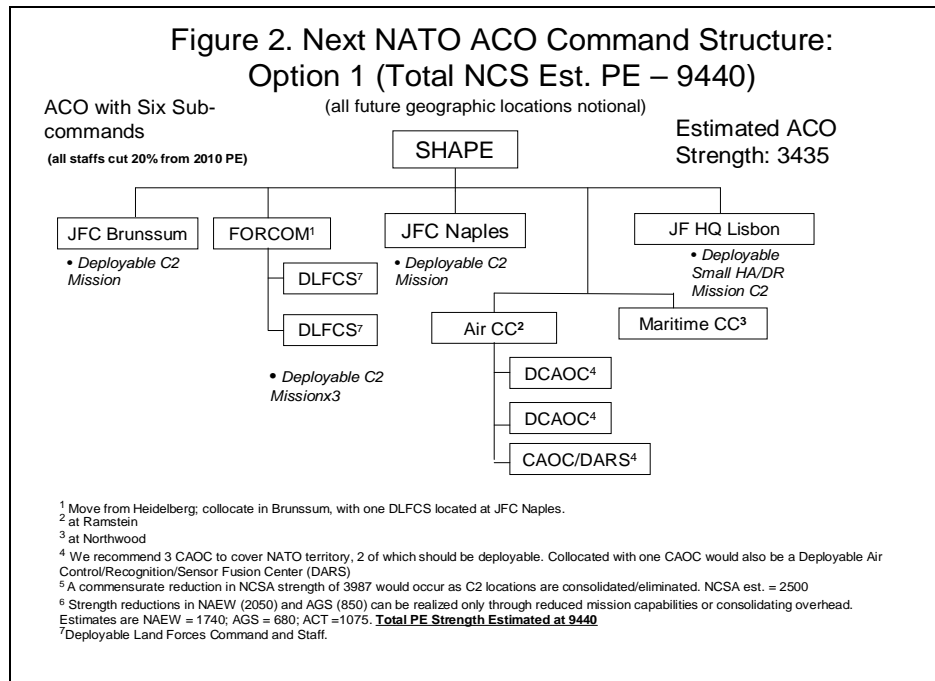
- First, ACO has the mission to oversee all NATO operations and does so through its subordinate commands. NFS commands are national or multinational but do not have NATO representative headquarters staffs. The NATO command structure should command, whether deployed or non-deployed.

- Second, the core peacetime work of the command structure is done by the component commands: deepening interoperability, harmonizing national transformations, preparing forces for operations, and assisting partners. This work is not a secondary task but the primary value embedded in the integrated military structure.

The numbers shown in each of the options are representational, not the result of detailed analysis. The primary focus is to present schemes that adhere to the principles above and highlight where cuts risk the viability of the command structure's core purpose. The numbers are simply the arithmetic sum of the authorized strengths of the headquarters shown, reduced by 20 percent as an across the board requirement. Across-the-board cuts of this magnitude can be expected to cut into real capabilities, and NATO has to be willing to say what missions it will no longer ask the command structure to address. Notably, with nations reportedly filling command structure staffs at approximately 80 percent there is some potential for such a high cut to have less impact, if nations will fill staffs in the future. Whatever the solution, in a strategic analysis across the board cuts are advisable. They allow commanders to determine where to allocate spaces within commands.

The future ACO model in figure 2 reduces the current six CC headquarters to three, and the six CAOCs to three (not all are currently in the command structure), while consolidating the remaining land CC at a JFC location. This model may not produce the deep cuts dictated by financial considerations alone; however it offers substantial cost savings while preserving the capabilities most essential to current and anticipated NATO operations. The focus is on streamlining the NATO command structure to a full operational minimum but no more. The model achieves important, needed economies, yet assures Allies of an efficient command structure able to meet NATO needs in providing combined command for all NATO missions. This model should raise no doubts in member states while convincing potential adversaries that NATO will remain a militarily viable alliance, even in the face of unprecedented financial difficulties. This is the minimum structure recommended if mission considerations, present and future, are given precedence over essential cost reduction.

Option 1 (figure 2 below), like all other options presented, is a two-level command structure. It retains one reduced component command of each type, two JFCs and one smaller JHQ focused on non-combat contingencies and overseeing the NRF in collaboration with ACT. The land component would occupy space collocated with JFC Brunssum to cut infrastructure cost as well as to achieve better deployable command integration with its parent JFC. Ideally, all DJSEs would have this close relationship with

the JFC. However, DJSEs are sizable (approximately 160 in this model, plus support units). Further analysis will be needed to determine the feasibility of full collocation. Combined with estimated CIS support from NCSA, NAEW/AGS numbers, and a smaller ACT structure (described below), Option 1 would reduce the command structure's authorized strength to a little over 9,400 personnel (after applying an across the board 20 percent cut in authorized PE positions).

Figure 2. Next NATO ACO Command Structure: Option 1 (Total NCS Est. PE – 9440)

ACO with Six Sub-commands
(all staffs cut 20% from 2010 PE)

(all future geographic locations notional)

Estimated ACO Strength: 3435

SHAPE

JFC Brunssum
• Deployable C2 Mission

FORCOM[1]

JFC Naples
• Deployable C2 Mission

JF HQ Lisbon
• Deployable Small HA/DR Mission C2

DLFCS[7]

DLFCS[7]
• Deployable C2 Missionx3

Air CC[2]

Maritime CC[3]

DCAOC[4]

DCAOC[4]

CAOC/DARS[4]

[1] Move from Heidelberg; collocate in Brunssum, with one DLFCS located at JFC Naples.
[2] at Ramstein
[3] at Northwood
[4] We recommend 3 CAOC to cover NATO territory, 2 of which should be deployable. Collocated with one CAOC would also be a Deployable Air Control/Recognition/Sensor Fusion Center (DARS)
[5] A commensurate reduction in NCSA strength of 3987 would occur as C2 locations are consolidated/eliminated. NCSA est. = 2500
[6] Strength reductions in NAEW (2050) and AGS (850) can be realized only through reduced mission capabilities or consolidating overhead. Estimates are NAEW = 1740; AGS = 680; ACT =1075. **Total PE Strength Estimated at 9440**
[7] Deployable Land Forces Command and Staff.

Option 2 (figure 3 below) shows an ACO structure of just two JFCs and three CCs, and both the land and maritime CCs are collocated with JFCs in order to conserve infrastructure cost. Both JFCs would have a deployable capability of their own for MJOs plus land force command if needed (MJO only). At least on JFC would have to include a maritime command capability. The CC Air at Ramstein also has deployment capabilities in its CAOCs and DARS. Conceivably, this NCS model could manage two MJO and at least three SJO with its two JFCs and deployable component command elements—two land, one maritime, and three air. However, this option eliminates the JHQ at Lisbon, thus requiring the remaining commands to assume responsibility for the NRF and all operations, regardless of number, size, geography or purpose. High Readiness Force (HRF) headquarters from the NFS can be expected to handle the deployed C2 requirement for small operations of limited duration; hence the increased missions for ACO should be manageable for a limited level of ambition in terms of smaller operations. This structure assumes a higher level of risk that the remaining commands will be unable to meet both essential peacetime missions such as building interoperability/partner capacity and oversee all operations. Thus, it is considered the minimum command structure recommended as viable, even if NATO is pressed to give cost reduction requirements precedent over meeting all NATO's C2 needs for present and anticipated future mission requirements. When aggregated with estimates for CIS support from

NCSA, NAEW/AGS, and the smaller ACT structure described below, the Option 2 command structure would have an authorized strength of approximately 8,845.

Figure 3. Next NATO ACO Command Structure: Option 2 (Total NCS Est. PE – 8845)
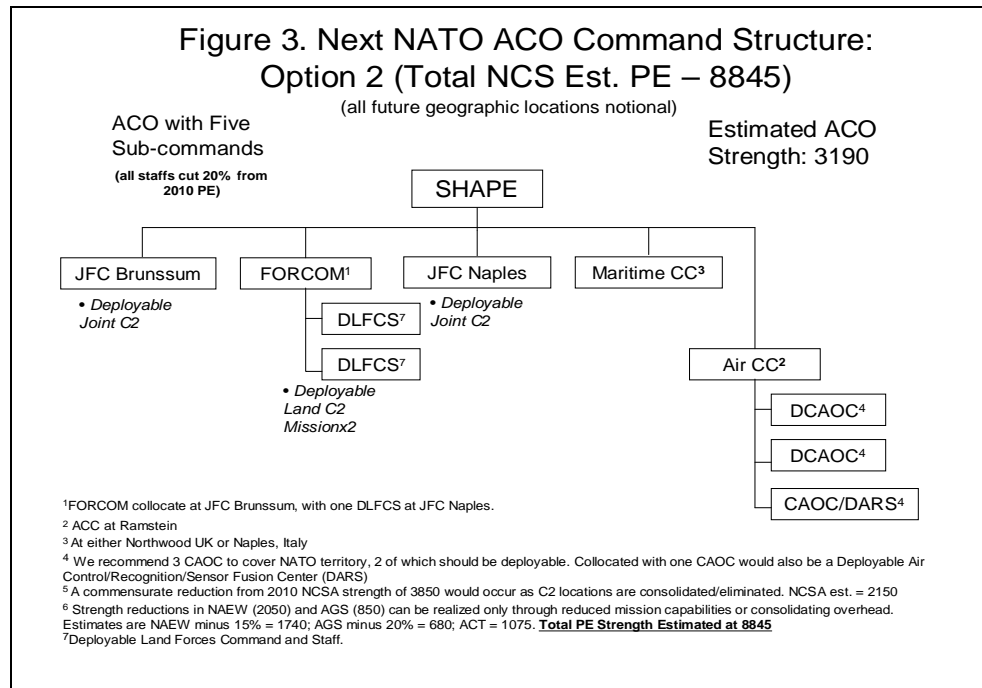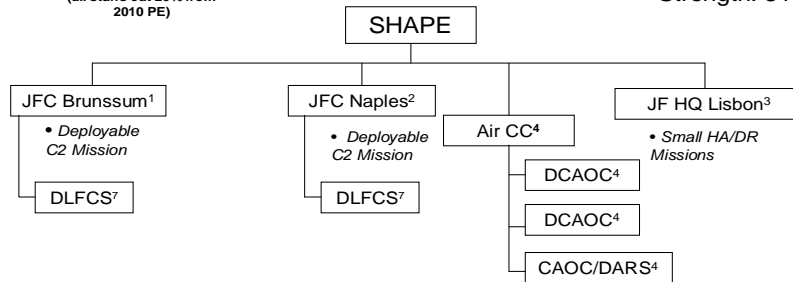
Option 3 (figure 4 below) is not recommended but illustrates the point at which the command structure may no longer be capable of performing all core missions and draws into question whether NATO's unique advantage in military readiness to respond will become hollow in the future. In this model, CC Land and CC Maritime are eliminated, while CC Air is retained for oversight of the ever-present air defense mission. The two JFCs and the smaller JHQ are deployable and able to respond to most missions, depending on the future level of ambition. However, they are also responsible for all PE missions including interoperability of allied militaries and building partner capacity, which risk becoming secondary missions rather than primary responsibilities. Even if each JFC were strengthened by 100 personnel, as done in this estimate to indicate an add-on staff devoted to partnership missions, the division of command attention between operations and peacetime missions will lead to a weakening of the latter, which remains an essential characteristic of a strong multinational military. Nor can nations orchestrate multinational force integration. ACT can light the way for nations, but training and exercises among national forces of like character requires a component command. The main reasons this is so critical are the number of nations involved and the increased complexity of transformation not only to more sophisticated network enabled capabilities, but to a broader range of operations, both by type and geographic/cultural regions. When aggregated with estimates for CIS support from NCSA, NAEW/AGS, and the smaller ACT structure described below, the Option 3 command structure would have an authorized strength of approximately 8,690, a too modest economy, indeed, for such a high price paid in lost capabilities. For the record, an estimated 400 additional personnel could be cut if JHQ Lisbon were also eliminated.

Figure 4. Next NATO ACO Command Structure
Option 3 (Total NCS Est. PE – 8685)

ACO with Four
Sub-commands

(all staffs cut 20% from 2010 PE)

(all future geographic locations notional)

Estimated ACO
Strength: 3182

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                          ┌──────────┐
                          │  SHAPE   │
                          └──────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┬──────────┬──────────────────┐
  ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
  │ JFC Brunssum[1] │ │ JFC Naples[2]  │        │ JF HQ Lisbon[3] │
  └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘          └──────────────┘
   • Deployable       • Deployable    ┌─────────┐   • Small HA/DR
     C2 Mission         C2 Mission    │ Air CC[4]  │     Missions
                                      └─────────┘
   ┌──────────┐       ┌──────────┐     ┌──────────┐
   │ DLFCS[7]    │     │ DLFCS[7]    │    │ DCAOC[4]   │
   └──────────┘       └──────────┘     └──────────┘
                                        ┌──────────┐
                                        │ DCAOC[4]   │
                                        └──────────┘
                                        ┌────────────┐
                                        │ CAOC/DARS[4] │
                                        └────────────┘
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[1] FORCOM eliminated. Deployable land command elements become internal sub units of JFCs.
[2] Maritime CC eliminated; becomes internal command responsibility of JFC's
[3] It is unlikely much reduction can be realized at JF HQ Lisbon as it is only half the size of the JFCs already due to its recent conversion from JF HQ status
[4] We recommend 3 CAOC to cover NATO territory, 2 of which should be deployable. Collocated with one CAOC would also be a Deployable Air Control/Recognition/Sensor Fusion Center (DARS)
[5] A commensurate reduction from NCSA 2010 strength of 3850 would occur as C2 locations are consolidated/eliminated: NCSA = 2000
[6] Strength reductions in NAEW (2050) and AGS (850) can be realized only through reduced mission capabilities or consolidating overhead. Estimates are NAEW minus 15% = 1740; AGS minus 20% = 680; ACT = 1075. **Total Estimated PE Strength is 8685.**
[7] Deployable Land Forces Command and Staff.

Reforms of the ACT Structure

ACT, though much smaller than ACO, is the other strategic part of the command structure review equation. One option discussed has been to fold ACT under ACO. This would be a mistake in our assessment. ACT serves two cardinal purposes. First it is the visible representation of the transatlantic relationship and of NATO in the United States. That is a significant factor for all Allies. Second, it is the essential catalyst for defining multinational transformation objectives and concepts, and for guiding national militaries toward greater interoperability, in particular for contingency operations that now include stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) and counterinsurgency (COIN).
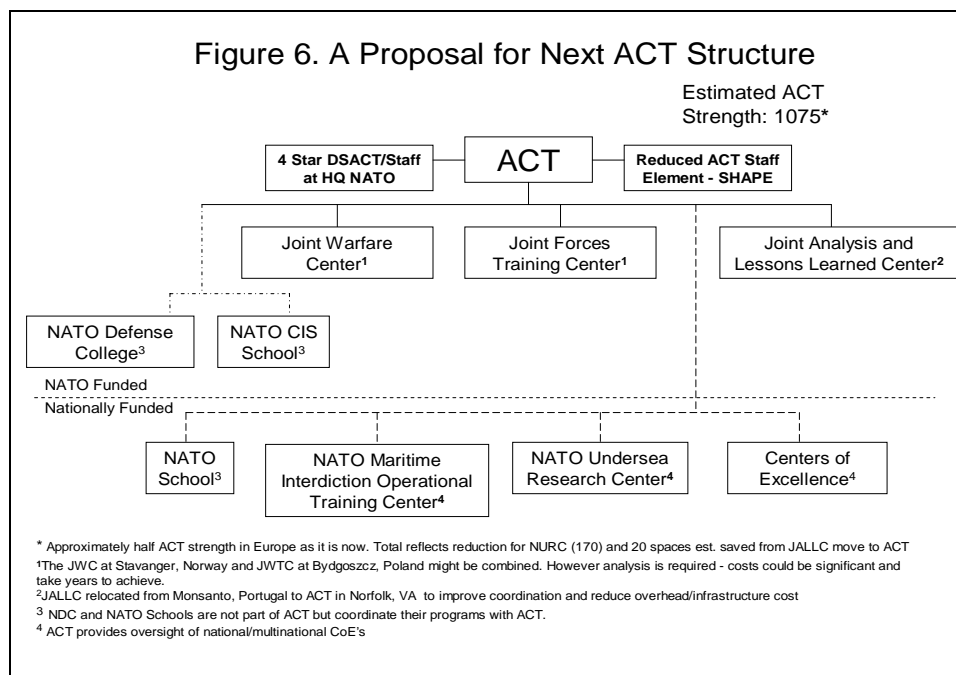
Nonetheless, the current ACT structure (see figure 5) is also subject to review and likely reductions in the present fiscal environment. That said, ACT is already staffed quite thin and will need close internal examination to identify where economies can be realized and what priority areas are in need of greater investment. One example is cyber security, an ACT portfolio closely related to a NATO top priority, development of the NATO Network Enabled Capability (NNEC). ACT had only one staff officer assigned to this area though mid-2010. Although two are planned, the billets are vacant for several months leaving ACT out of NATO cyber defense development at the staff level for an extended period. Indications are that ACT is similarly "one deep" in other areas. As a result we urge caution in cutting ACT further. It is NATO's primary investment in future capabilities.

Figure 5: ACT's Current Structure
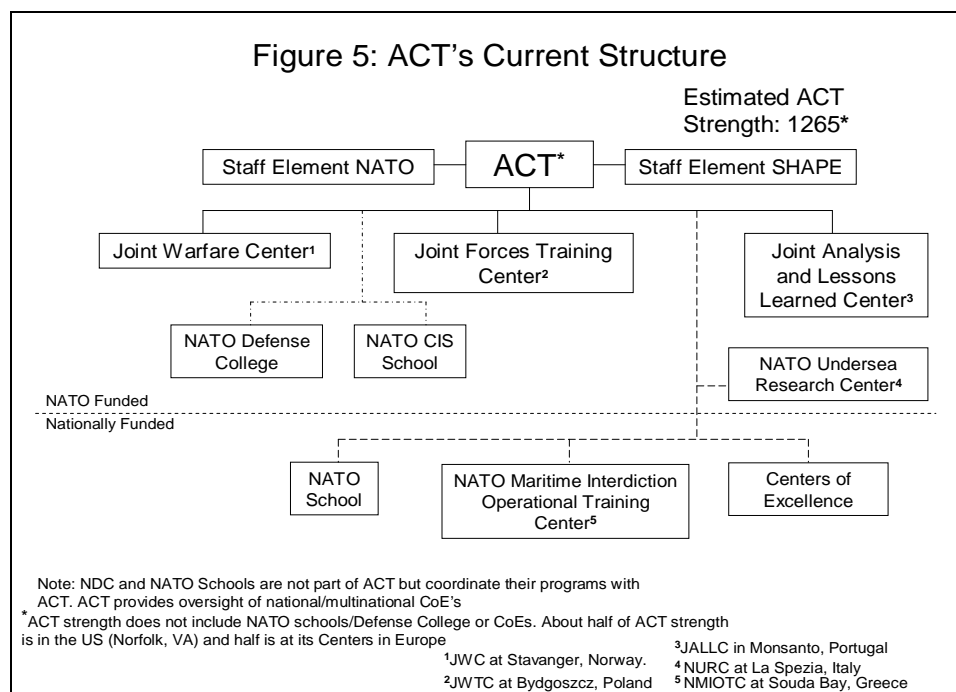
In figure 5, ACT responsibilities toward NATO Schools are indicated for completeness; the schools are not part of the command structure or included in the personnel estimates. ACT also has responsibilities to 13 nationally-funded Centers of Excellence (CoEs). In order to get the best value out of NATO's considerable investment

in transformation, ACT should become more closely linked to both the schools and CoEs. One challenge for ACT is that its customers are almost universally in Europe and it is located not just in the U.S. but away from efficient international travel routes. As a result the transformational influence of ACT across NATO and with member and partner militaries is less than optimum. A partial solution is realized in that approximately half of ACT's strength is located in Europe – in Norway, Poland, Portugal, and at HQ NATO and SHAPE. Still, influencing NATO over strategic distances is a factor for ACT.

These considerations notwithstanding there are some economies that can be achieved within ACT. First, NATO should re-characterize the NATO Undersea Research Center at LaSpezia from NATO to national funding. Second, the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center (JALLC) in Monsanto could be brought back to ACT in Virginia or (as an option) collocated at SHAPE without harm since its sources are deployed forces. We recommend only these changes to ACT strength for the reasons already stated. However, another modification proposed is to relocate the Deputy SACT (DSACT) to HQ NATO and shift substantial ACT staff from SHAPE to HQ NATO to support this move in a personnel neutral transition. The presence of DSACT permanently at NATO headquarters, able to establish daily face-to-face ties with the IS, IMS and SHAPE, as well as to work more efficiently with ACT Centers and CoEs, and with member militaries on the ground, should greatly improve ACT's value to the Alliance. It might also be useful to locate ACT's political advisor with DSACT to improve ties on the civilian side with member missions. In Norfolk, steps should be taken with JFCOM to share common liaison elements from those European states who are also NATO allies. ACT should also establish a suitable liaison cell at the Pentagon. These proposed changes are reflected by the diagram and numbers in figure 6.

Figure 6. A Proposal for Next ACT Structure

Estimated ACT Strength: 1075*

4 Star DSACT/Staff at HQ NATO — ACT — Reduced ACT Staff Element - SHAPE

Joint Warfare Center[1]

Joint Forces Training Center[1]

Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center[2]

NATO Defense College[3]

NATO CIS School[3]

NATO Funded

Nationally Funded

NATO School[3]

NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Center[4]

NATO Undersea Research Center[4]

Centers of Excellence[4]

* Approximately half ACT strength in Europe as it is now. Total reflects reduction for NURC (170) and 20 spaces est. saved from JALLC move to ACT
[1] The JWC at Stavanger, Norway and JWTC at Bydgoszcz, Poland might be combined. However analysis is required - costs could be significant and take years to achieve.
[2] JALLC relocated from Monsanto, Portugal to ACT in Norfolk, VA to improve coordination and reduce overhead/infrastructure cost
[3] NDC and NATO Schools are not part of ACT but coordinate their programs with ACT.
[4] ACT provides oversight of national/multinational CoE's

Additional Ways to Achieve Efficiencies

Consolidating Commands. As already suggested, improvement in mission performance can be achieved if some consolidation of commands can be implemented. Providing the most effective C2 for initial deployment forces should be a high operational priority, aside from the political considerations of geographic dispersion (discussed below). Currently, DJSEs are geographically distant from the commands that will employ them. This poses challenges in developing the close working relationships required for successful teamwork when facing significant challenges and uncertainty over strategic distances. However, existing up-to-date facilities sufficient to accommodate FORCOM/DJSEs are thought to be available adjacent to or nearby JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples. Moving FORCOM/DJSEs to be collocated with JFCs Brunssum and Naples would both improve operational command and control and reduce infrastructure cost. There may also be economies in support forces. For example, NCSA maintains CIS sectors for each current command, ten in all. NCSA should be asked to propose what reductions might be possible in CIS support by collocating commands.

Reduce Command Structure Personnel. Further reduction of NATO command structure personnel is one way to reduce expenses and free more resources for other NATO requirements. Notwithstanding this emphasis, we urge caution in considering any cuts in ACT. While economies at ACT may be possible, it is NATO's signal investment in the future, a commitment to facilitate transformation in the context of multinational operations. ACT is still finding its footing in order to make its full contribution. It may be the one command that needs more not less in terms of staff capacity.

Some observers believe manning level across the current command structure could be cut by as much as 20 percent (to 10,400) with little or no impact. As already noted, experience shows command structure staffs are often filled to 80 percent or so of their authorized strength, suggesting that command structure staffing requirement recommended by NATO military leaders are typically viewed by nations as inflated. Commanders have also said that many staff officers arrive with either weak high-level staff skills or low levels of English comprehension. If widespread, this situation would mean the actual number of capable staff officers across the command structure is well below authorized levels already.

Organization and staffing requirements for each headquarters should be based firstly on a thorough assessment of future tasks assigned. These will include the agreed level of ambition as well as other missions, especially low profile yet resource intensive interoperability and partnership activities. The current structure should be reviewed to confirm each billet and determine any that are excess to mission requirements. Undermanned headquarters can give a false sense of capacity. Military personnel can typically stretch to cover gaps in the short term. However, the risk of degraded or ineffective C2 increases over time, especially with heightened mission complexity or operations tempo. Whatever command structure is agreed and approved should be filled as planned by appropriately experienced and capable staffs. It should be funded as required to ensure capability to perform missions as designated in NATO's level of ambition.

Finally, reducing command structure personnel demands can be accomplished more completely if NATO negotiates better with host nations for basic support services, such

as contractor base security and routine logistics services. The United States provides an example in this area by providing substantial support for ACT. Hosting nations benefit economically as well as politically and militarily from hosted NATO commands. They should be asked to provide robust service support as well as concessions in terms of other cost to the Alliance as a whole.

As each command conducts rigorous reviews of their personnel requirements further efficiencies can be achieved. Even more important, the eventual drawdown in ISAF, and perhaps the turning over of KFOR's mission to the EU at some point in the future, will reduce pressure on filling ACO and ACT with quality staffs that can achieve a lot within lower numbers. It would be no surprise if these operational reductions come before a new peacetime establishment can be put in place.

Enhance Partnership/Capacity Building Capability. A caution must be raised that any future command structure should include sufficient staff below the strategic level to plan and implement essential partnership programs, including Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC). When under staffed, partnership activities are frequently the first to be curtailed and exercises can experience a high rate of cancellations. Partnership activities are basic and important. If not properly considered in organizational restructuring, NATO could lose essential capabilities for shaping partner armed forces.

NATO works with many nations, either directly or through Alliance structures such as the PfP and Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Goals include increasing capacity and capability of partners, creating stability, and building cooperation in regional areas (Black Sea, Arabian Gulf, Maghreb, etc.) and functional areas (energy security, illegal migration, WMD, counter drug, etc.). The forces and resources needed to build partner capacity are substantial, yet they are far less costly than actual military operations.

NATO's objective is to deliver more capable, interoperable forces and build partner and member force capacity, especially for participating in NATO missions. In reality, some non-operational missions, such as supporting PfP training, exercises, and other activities with partners are essential to maintaining preparedness and capacity to perform NATO's operational missions. However, as already noted, they also require substantial investment in staff planning and coordination as well as the engagement of subordinate national headquarters and forces. Component commands play a central role in building capacity and interoperability across the land, air, and maritime forces of all members and partners. NATO is attempting the same with member SOF forces through its fledgling NATO SOF Headquarters (not a part of the command structure but national funded, principally by the U.S. Any future command structure must be robust enough to perform both operational and non-operational tasks.

Strengthen ACT. NATO must underwrite ACT far more strongly, such that it carries real influence over how NATO transforms organizationally and operationally, as well as in oversight of defense planning and in a proactive advisory capacity to national transformation initiatives. ACT has to be the engine of multinational education, training, exercises, and doctrine development. Transformation is not only or even mainly about equipment procurement. It is about cultural changes and ways of thinking, the emergence of new concepts through experimentation, applied lessons learned, and the synthesis of

best practices. NATO needs a catalytic functional command imparting transformative ideas to the Alliance, its members, and partners. ACT must be fully engaged in these tasks with operational forces even as they are committed to ongoing missions.

Recognize the Need for Civil Resources Planning Staffs at NATO HQ and SHAPE. For the Comprehensive Approach concept and a genuine civilian-military partnership to be realized at the operational and tactical levels—in the field—NATO HQ and SHAPE have to be a strengthen and realigned such that they become truly able to deliver civilian interagency capabilities alongside NATO military operations. Fundamental thinking is needed on how to do this effectively. It is paramount that the political/strategic side of NATO is integrated, active and responsive – truly capable of imparting interagency-based direction to field forces consistent with a comprehensive approach to conflict management and crisis resolution. The critical component is the steady, dependable availability of civilian expertise for operational planning in the core competencies of stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Increase Budget Flexibility. It has been suggested that ACO and ACT could benefit from greater budget flexibility, and that ACO and ACT need a budget to spend (and to be held to account for) in lieu of the present method of requiring a specific request for every item. Current practices block the Supreme Commanders essential freedom of action and are unnecessarily restrictive, unresponsive to the pace of operational developments and are bureaucratically cumbersome. A budget process devised years ago impedes the critical optempo demanded by current operations.

Ensure Quality Personnel. The quality of personnel that NATO nations post to the command structure is another area of concern that must be addressed. Over recent years, in the United States NATO competes with CENTCOM for top talent, and the press of operations beyond Europe means that U.S. officers can reach flag rank never having been assigned to NATO or in Europe. In Europe, the EU competes with NATO for top talent among officers, especially among the longest-term NATO allies. For personnel from some newer nations, English language skills are often weak, as is knowledge of high NATO staff procedures. Fewer senior staff have 'come up through the ranks,' having been assigned in the field with the Alliance or having served at lower levels in the command structure. In short, many staffers being assigned to NATO come as much to learn as to contribute. At some headquarters, the pool of high-performing staff officers is far below 50 percent of those assigned, simply because nations are not sending fully qualified personnel.

Command Structure Geographic Footprint

Many of the suggested future modifications to the NATO command structure would involve adjustments to so-called geographical footprint. Removing a requirement that command structure changes retain the current footprint would undoubtedly provide an opportunity for changes based more on military requirements and less on political imperatives. However, throughout the history of command structure reforms, this has proven one of the most challenging and contentious issues in terms of reducing the number of headquarters.

One argument made by the NATO Military Committee has been that every potential NATO operation requires a dedicated operational-level headquarters. This assertion should be carefully examined for its application to smaller operations. Another argument made by some nations with command structure presence is that a visible physical NATO presence on their soil 1) serves as both a real and symbolic deterrent to nations that might contemplate military action against a border NATO members; and 2) reinforces and enhances public understanding of, and support for, the costs as well as the benefits associated with NATO membership;

In a new command structure review the factor of geographic dispersion will be no less a political consideration and it may actually be an even harder challenge. Should NATO, for example, decide to close its component commands in Izmir, Naples and Madrid along with its JFC in Lisbon and the CAOC in Larissa, four southern tier members would have no significant NATO presence on their territory and a fifth would be reduced to one command. That could create a regional impression of exclusion and may also be perceived by potential challengers to NATO as a signal of reduced interest. Given the importance of the Air CC at Ramstein and Land CC at Heidelberg to US presence in Europe this scenario is one potential outcome. In fact, the command structure has never been solely about military requirements; political factors are all very real.

Interrelationship of NATO Command Structure and the Strategic Concept

The new NATO Strategic Concept should make clear the agreed missions of the Alliance, including both operational and peacetime force transformation and preparation missions These should be missions that not only will heads of State and Government agree to undertake, but that their respective governments and publics will support and sustain with adequate investment in capabilities. In this critical respect, the new Strategic Concept and the command structure to be charged with its fulfillment are clearly interrelated. Ultimately, any further consideration of command structure reforms will inevitably be undertaken within the context of how well the new Strategic Concept addresses and clarifies key policy issues including:

- *Agreeing on NATO's geographic focus.* NATO's geographic areas of responsibility, engagement, and interest, and its priorities within those areas for military activities, including partner's engagement, crisis response, and especially Article 5 preparedness.

- *Defining NATO Missions.* In recent years, NATO has adopted several important new missions. In addition to the expansive missions of partnership activities and crisis response (including humanitarian assistance/disaster response), NATO has added requirements for cyber defense, energy security, and combating piracy. The capabilities NATO expects to maintain in each of these mission areas should be agreed at the policy level, which in turn will provide the overall framework for determining the appropriate NATO level of ambition.

- *NATO Russia Policy.* Should NATO enhance deterrence and other capabilities in response to increasing Russian assertiveness in Europe and adjacent areas, including an increased permanent and rotational presence in NATO's northern and eastern areas? Meanwhile, as NATO-Russia military-to-military activities pick up, the question of adequate command structure manning and resources will be raised again.

- *Importance of NATO Outreach/Capacity Building.* The May 2010 Group of Experts Report *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement,* noted the crucial role of partnership is NATO's future and the command structure is an integral participant in those activities. NATO works side by side with many nations, either individually or through NATO-established structures such as the PfP, MD and ICI, in order to increase their capacity and capability, especially for NATO's operational partners. Though such activities, the Alliance helps creates stability and builds cooperation across various regions of interest to NATO (such as the Black Sea, Arabian Gulf, Maghreb, etc.), and in functional areas of common security interest with partners (e.g., energy security, illegal migration, WMD, counter drug, etc.). These are wise investments in preventing crises that could require NATO to commit operational forces. The pace and scope of partner activities create substantial (and often unseen) demands on the command structure as well as the force structure. If this mission is to be accomplished effectively, its command structure requirements need to be adequately resourced by members

- *Role of ACT.* The Strategic Concept should seek strong consensus on ACT's enduring role as the active catalyst to enhance the multinational character of military

transformation among members and partners, as well as NATO's own capabilities. Transformation is not only new equipment but also the training, exercising, education, and concept development that create capabilities, such as Comprehensive Approach, that did not exist before. ACT needs a clearer mandate and greater influence in NATO.

- *Relationship with the EU on security/defense matters*. NATO engagement with the growing EU military structure is an important means of strengthening both organizations. This is particularly critical for building capacity for employing the Comprehensive Approach concept of civilian-military operational response. Defining the broad scope of NATO-EU interaction will clarify the investment NATO expects to make in staff and resources for a viable NATO-EU relationship to unfold. In turn, there should be some economies of force as each organization is able to rely more on the other.

Next Steps

A variety of suggestions have been offered in the past on how NATO can agree on further command structure changes. For example, it has been suggested NATO undertakes a U.S.-style base realignment and closure (BRAC) study as a way to reach difficult political decisions on closing geographic locations no longer required. Under the BRAC process, an outside expert committee assessed and made recommendations regarding excess or non-cost effective U.S. military bases and advised on the closure or consolidations of facilities. After receiving the report, the U.S. Congress had to conduct a simple up or down vote on the entire package of recommendations—the Congress could not pick and choose. The neutrality and transparency of the process has resulted in successful reductions in base holdings for the US and might be useful for NATO.

The Alliance has turned to another round of reforms that include a new command structure, to be agreed at least in broad form alongside the new Strategic Concept at Lisbon. Past command structure reforms have taken years to put in place, sometimes after long contentious debates before political agreement was reached. For any future command structure reform that NATO undertakes, it is essential that NATO not only agree on clear missions for the command structure, but also commit collectively to provide the necessary resources the command structure will need to carry out effectively and efficiently the missions assigned.